

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00
IO-13 DOE-11 SOE-02 DOEE-00 ACDA-12 /094 W
-----122299 151809Z /47

O 151653Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1952
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 3539

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ENRG, PBOR, IS, EG, US
SUBJECT: AMOCO INCIDENT

REF: A. TEL AVIV 3456, B. STATE 65264

1. IT LOOKS AS IF THE ISRAELIS MAY BE STIRRING UP THINGS AGAIN IN WHAT WEIZMAN CALLS "THE GULF OF SEWAGE."
2. LATE THIS AFTERNOON A MINISTRY OF DEFENSE LIAISON OFFICER CALLED ACTING DAO COLONEL WILLIAMS TO INFORM HIM THAT A TEAM OF GEOGRAPHERS WOULD BE FLYING DOWN TO THE AMOCO DRILLING SITE TOMORROW (MARCH 16) TO UNDERTAKE THE DEFINITIVE CALCULATIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE PLACEMENT OF THE AMOCO BOUYS. HE SAID THE TEAM WOULD LIKE PERMISSION TO BOARD THE DRILL RIG. COL. WILLIAMS RESPONDED THAT THIS MATTER WAS A POLITICAL ISSUE AND HE HAD NO AUTHORITY TO DISCUSS IT WITH THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE.
3. I HAVE JUST TALKED TO EVRON ON THE PHONE ABOUT THE PROBLEM. I REMINDED HIM THAT WHEN I HAD SEEN YADIN ON MARCH 10 I HAD SPECIFICALLY NOTED
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AT THE OUTSET OF OUR CONVERSATION THAT BECAUSE THIS WAS A POLITICAL ISSUE I WAS RAISING IT WITH HIM IN HIS CAPACITY AS DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, NOT ACTING MINISTER OF DEFENSE. NOTHING HAD CHANGED IN THE INTERIM INsofar AS THE NATURE OF THE ISSUE WAS CONCERNED, I SAID, AND THEREFORE I WAS PUZZLED AS TO WHY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE KEPT INVOLVING

ITSELF IN THE ISSUE. I ADDED THAT WEIZMAN HAD STARTED TO RAISE THE PROBLEM, BUT HAD DECIDED HE DID NOT WANT TO BECOME INVOLVED IN IT. I SAID I WOULD HAVE TOLD HIM THE SAME THING IF HE HAD TRIED TO CONTINUE THE DISCUSSION.

4. I THEN WENT ON TO TELL EVRON THAT WE HAD ASSUMED IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY FURTHER PROBLEMS AT THE SITE THAT THE ISRAELIS HAD CONCLUDED THEY HAD MADE AN ERROR IN THEIR CALCULATIONS. I TOLD HIM THAT IN THE BEGINNING OF THIS DISPUTE ONE OF THE ISRAELI NAVAL OFFICERS HAD MADE AVAILABLE TO THE DRILL RIG CAPTAIN A SET OF COORDINATES WHICH WAS SO INACCURATE THEY THEY COULD NOT BE PLOTTED ON A GULF OF SUEZ MAP. WE HAD AMPLE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT ADDITIONAL ERRORS HAD BEEN MADE AS THE DISPUTE CONTINUED TO FESTER. BUT WE HAD THOUGHT ALL PARTIES WERE IN AGREEMENT THAT THE DRILL RIG AT LEAST WAS ON THE WEST SIDE OF THAT CELEBRATED MEDIAN LINE WHICH ONLY THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZED. THUS, I WAS ALL THE MORE PUZZLED TO BE INFORMED THAT A GROUP OF ISRAELI EXPERTS WISHED TO BOARD THE RIG IN EGYPTIAN WATERS. THIS WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE EITHER TO THE EGYPTIANS OR TO THE AMERICANS, I TOLD EVRON THAT IN FACT IF ANY PROBLEM DOES REMAIN , I THOUGHT HE AND I OR SOMEONE ELSE FROM THE MINISTRY HE WISHED TO DESIGNATE SHOULD PROMPTLY GET TOGETHER TOMORROW. MEANWHILE, CONFIDENTIAL

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I URGED THAT NO TEAM BE DISPATCHED.

5. EVRON PUT UP A FEEBLE ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE CONTINUING AS OUR PRINCIPAL INTERLOCUTOR, BUT GRACIOUSLY GAVE WAY IN THE FACE OF MY OBSTINANCE. HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO CHECK WITH DAYAN AS TO WHAT TO DO NEXT AND WOULD BE BACK IN TOUCH. HE HAS JUST PHONED BACK TO SAY THAT HE HAS TALKED WITH DAYAN. DAYAN'S SOLUTION IS FOR US TO WORK THINGS OUT WITH YADIN, SINCE HE IS THE MAN WE STARTED WITH. I TOLD EVRON THAT WAS FINE WITH ME. EVRON IS TRYING TO ARRANGE AN APPOINTMENT FOR TOMORROW. I REITERATED THAT I DID NOT WISH TO SEE THE ISRAELIS TAKE ANY PRECIPATE ACTION TOMORROW IN REGARD TO THEIR TEAM OF EXPERTS UNTIL YADIN AND I HAD HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK. EVRON TOLD ME TO RELAX ON THAT SCORE. VIETS

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Message Attributes

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